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MORE LIFE IN THE OPEN

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A few years ago there was added to several of the Chautauqua Assemblies throughout the Middle West a feature which attempted to do for the children what the carefully arranged popular educational platforms did for the adults—provide amusement and instruction in a form sufficiently palatable to make it attractive even in the hot days of August. Every now and then to the ears of parents intent on some speaker's exposition of the beauties of Browning, the marvels of liquid air, or the iniquity of the Senate, there came from remote distances faint echoes of wild war-whoops, followed occasionally by the appearance of a troupe of happy boys radiant in feathers and other regalia of Indian trappings. By last summer these groups, begun as incidental features of an adult popular educational movement, had gathered enough independent strength to send delegates from several sections to an encampment under the leadership of Ernest Thompson Seton and Dan Beard. During the past few months several articles descriptive of this American movement have appeared in print, such as "Let's Play Indian, or Making a New American Boy through Woodcraft," in the October number of *Everybody's Magazine*, and "Organized Boyhood" in the December number of *The Success Magazine*.

Just about a year ago I happened to be walking at dusk through one of the villages of Wordsworth's Lake Country. As I came to a large open field, I saw a bonfire in the middle of it, and approaching it from various directions and marching or manoeuvering around it were a number of fine young English boys, dressed somewhat in the manner of our American cowboys. A few weeks later, at a splendid school in the south of England, I came upon two lads, one of whom was carefully

searching or scrutinizing a very hard, gravely piece of ground, which he traversed in ever-widening circles, while the other boy seemed to be criticizing the searcher's actions. The boys in the Lake district and the boys in the South were all members of the Baden-Powell Boy Scouts—the first group being engaged in some of their regular games, the other group consisting of a tenderfoot accompanied by a scout-master, under whose direction he was endeavoring to pass Test Four of the requirements for a second-class scout. This is to track half a mile in twenty-five minutes—in other words, to trace through soft and hard dirt, through grass and underbrush, an artificial mark resembling the track of a bird's or animal's foot, which the scout-master has prepared some time before.

Between Christmas and New Year's in Berlin, my enthusiastic *Untersekunder* German friend came rushing to me to say I must go with him to the *Wintersonnenwendfeier* on the third of January, which the *Alt-Wandervögel Bund für Jugendwanderungen* was to hold. I shall not attempt to describe this unique large gathering of old and young lovers of the traditional German wandering or foot-traveling. I can only suggest a combination of jovial good fellowship, of lengthy disquisitions on the beauties of German scenery, of curious undramatic allegorical scenes, of dizzying, whirling, irreversible waltzing, and especially of songs, and songs, and more songs, sung literally hour after hour by lusty German throats. This celebration was one manifestation of the German movement for encouraging foot-traveling. With this picture of an indoor celebration, however, must be coupled a glimpse of hundreds of German students, who, during the chilly, almost raw days of the early spring vacation, or during the hot summer period, started off, with knapsack and guitar or mandolin strapped on their backs, to tramp over Germany and the surrounding countries, and even took ship to Scotland to march on foot from Edinburgh to London.

All of these movements, in Germany and England and in America, are part of organized efforts to extend and make of greater value the play and outdoor life of boys. While alike

in general aim, the German *Wandervögel* or wandering birds, the English Boy Scouts, and the American Seton Indians, or Boy Scouts—for this name is gradually replacing with us the name of Indians—are considerably different in matters of detail. These differences can most readily be seen by comparing the organizations from three or four points of view.

1. *Founders*.—Ernest Thompson Seton, lover of the wilds, friends of the Indians, well versed in woodcraft and hunting—especially with the sketchbook and camera—embodied, in formulating the plans for the Seton Indians, all those features of the life of the keen-eyed, strong-bodied woodsman which he felt would develop a finer race of young American men. Gen. R. S. S. Baden-Powell, a typical British army officer, in building upon the suggestions formulated by Mr. Seton and in adapting them for use in England, laid stress on the values of military obedience and procedure in developing patriotic young Britons. Professor Dr. Kolbe, an enthusiastic Berlin schoolmaster, recognizing that city life and the severe demands of modern education were threatening the loss of the old German foot-traveling and the many other features of the *Studentwandern*, endowed this fine old custom with new life and vigor by instituting the *Wandervögel*.

2. *Membership*.—Practically the only requirement in the German organization is that a boy be over ten years of age. This means that there are included in the fifteen thousand or more members (in 1909) practically all ages. In one party there may be included, therefore, grandfather, father, and son. For some of the excursions, such as the so-called *Familienausflüge*, the mothers, sisters, and other feminine connections may be included—a provision for which I have found no parallel in the English and American organizations. To enter the Boy Scouts or the Seton Indians—and the two organizations have become so much alike that they may here be classed together—a number of definite tests must be passed by the applicant. These include the learning of certain signs and rules, the history of the national anthem and the tying of four standard knots, and the subscription to the scout's oath. This oath consists of a num-

ber of provisions in regard to honor, loyalty, duty, courtesy, friendliness, and other virtues. In the German organization all members are on the same footing, with the exception of a few leaders, but in the Boy Scouts there are, besides the officers, three classes of members: tenderfeet, and first- and second-class scouts. The candidate who wishes to advance must gradually perfect himself in such matters as bandaging in first-aid, signaling, scouting, the building of camp fires and the cooking of meals in the open, performing rather strenuous physical feats of endurance and quickness, attaining certain skill as a woodsman, and developing habits of frugality by beginning and gradually adding to a fund in the savings bank.

3. *Costume*.—The only change which a German boy makes in his clothing when he becomes a *Wandervogel* is to exchange his hat for a little green student-cap or *Mütze*. The specifications for a scout's uniform, on the other hand, are very minute, and call for decided changes from ordinary clothing. In general, the outfit is similar to that of our western cowboys, except that knicker-breeches replace the long trousers. In addition to their clothing, the Boy Scouts all wear the company badge of an arrowhead with the motto "Be Prepared" below it. To this may be added, as they are earned, a large number of special badges and medals.

4. *Specific aims*.—The objects of the German organization may be said to be as follows: (a) encouraging tramping or extended excursions on foot; (b) increasing the love of the fatherland; (c) extending fellowship; and (d) training in frugal living.

a) The German *Wanderlust* or love of travel is so beneficial from a physical-educational point of view that the German nation is loth to have it disappear on account of modern transportation conditions. The well-organized *Turnvereine*, or gymnasiums, combined with the rapidly developing city out-of-door-sports associations, meet adequately most of the physical needs of the growing youth, but they do not take the place of that love of roving which has been characteristic of the Teutons for a thousand or more years. To meet this need the *Wander-*

vögel arose. Their spirit is well exemplified in one of their songs:

Wohlauf, die Luft geht frisch und rein,
Wer lange sitzt muss rosten;
Den allerschönsten Sonnenschein
Lässt uns der Himmel kosten.
Jetzt reich mir Stab und Ordenskleid
Der fahrenden Scholaren,
Ich will zur schönen Sommerszeit
Ins Land der Franken fahren.

b) Love of the natural and man-made beauties of their country is with the Germans one incentive to intense patriotism. *Verschönerungsvereine*, associations for beautifying the country, are very numerous, and in every part of Germany the traveler finds frequent signs, not all of which are put up with ulterior commercial motives, "Schöner Ausblick," with an arrow pointing the direction from which the beautiful view may be obtained. To enable the youth of the land to drink in these beauties and to make the settings of song and legend familiar ground is another object of the *Wandervögel*. One stanza of their marching song is:

O Vaterland, so weit, so schön,
Lass, Vaterland, dich grüssen.
Heil euch, ihr Wälder, Tal und Höhn,
Feld, Strom, und grünen Wiesen.

c) Sociability is developed and acquaintanceship extended not only by the mingling of the members actually traveling on any excursion—varied and intimate as this is—but also by the meeting of associated friends in their homes in various parts of the empire. Nevertheless the main social event is the gathering about the camp fire for the *Abkochen* or preparation of the meal. It is significant that the first and thus far the only series of illustrated postcards which the association has put out is entirely devoted to the camp cooking, and represents the various groups, from a few boys to a hundred or more families, including the mothers and daughters, in various attitudes before, during, and after the meal. The *Wandervögel* seem to join with

the Boy Scouts in laying stress on the "magic of the camp fire," although the two organizations may have different influences in mind.

d) As an influence stemming the wave of extravagant living which is sweeping over Germany as well as all other progressive countries, frugal living and most inexpensive traveling is a cardinal virtue with the German boys' association. By means of walking all the shorter distances and taking third- or fourth-class carriages when a long stretch must be covered, by sleeping in the open, in barns or sheds, or, when absolutely necessary, in the most moderate-priced hotels, and by doing their own cooking, they keep the cost of the outing down to about a mark, twenty-five cents, a day. And the necessity of living on this scale is obligatory upon all of the twelve thousand members, whatever their financial standing.

In the official handbook of the Boy Scouts¹ it is stated that in the organization nine leading principles control: recreation, camp life, self-government, the magic of the camp fire, woodcraft pursuits, honors by standards, personal achievement, heroic ideal, and picturesqueness in everything. Most of these headings are self-explanatory, but a word or two may be desirable on some of them.

One of the most significant is the granting of honors by standards. As far as possible, the competitive principle of games, by which one player wins by defeating another, is done away with. Instead, certain tasks or exploits are specified to be done under certain conditions, and when these have been accomplished each of the victorious contestants is said to have gained the honors specified and is entitled to wear certain badges. For example, under general athletics, a child under ten who runs fifty yards in seven and one-fifth seconds, or a boy between ten and fourteen who does the same in seven seconds, is entitled to honors in running. In the standing broad jump, five feet by a boy under

¹ *The Boy Scouts of America. A Handbook of Woodcraft, Scouting, and Lifecraft.* By ERNST THOMPSON SETON. With which is incorporated by arrangement General BADEN-POWELL'S *Scouting for Boys*. Published for the Boy Scouts of America by Doubleday, Page & Co., New York; 1910. Pp. xii+192.

ten, six feet by a boy under fourteen, seven feet by a boy under eighteen, and nine feet by a man over eighteen, wins honors for as many as can accomplish it. (Men over seventy and girls over fourteen all belong to the class of "lads," namely, boys between fourteen and eighteen.)

Honors are granted not only for general athletics but for skating, swimming, turning cartwheels and handsprings, bathing out-of-doors three hundred or more days in the year, sailing, canoeing, camping, activity as chauffeur and mechanic under certain conditions, mountain-climbing, difficult tests of eyesight, big-game hunting, and general acts of heroism involving risk of life. Besides these red honors there are white honors for camp life and scouting, and blue honors for nature-study according to lists drawn up by John Burroughs, Frank M. Chapman of the American Museum of Natural History of New York City, and Professor Charles D. Walcott, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. In obtaining all these honors, the boy is competing not directly with his mates, but with himself, ignorance, and time and space. When he succeeds he does not do so by defeating someone else, but by pushing himself forward.

Everything is done in the organization to appeal to the boy's love of the picturesque and romantic. Costumes are attractive, the names given to the officers and members are suggestive of thrilling tales, many novel games are played, fine old stories are provided to be told about the camp fire at night, and Indian signs made with stones, twigs, grass, blazes in trees, and columns of smoke rising from peculiarly arranged camp fires are used as secret codes between various bodies of the scouts.

This entire movement is fraught with great educational possibilities, and is one with which every teacher should become acquainted. Already in England there are four hundred thousand members, and, while there are not as yet so many in America, the idea of the movement has already obtained a strong hold upon the American boy. The two organizations which for a time seemed to be competing, the Seton Indians under Mr. Seton and the Sons of Daniel Boone under Mr. Dan Beard, have now joined forces, and as a result a vast increase in the extent of the

organization seems probable during the next year.² Should this movement become as strong as its active leaders hope it will, the results upon our young men during the next decade may be of far-reaching importance.

It is probable that as the various national ideals become better known there will be a reacting of one upon the other. It is certain that the *Wandervögel* are already feeling the influence of the Boy Scouts, and it would be strange if some of the German *Wanderlust* did not creep into the American and English organizations.

²A novel method of extending the knowledge of the movement is about to be inaugurated by adding to many moving-picture entertainments throughout the country scenes showing the boy scouts in action at their camp conducted last summer by Mr. Seton and Mr. Beard at Silver Bay, New York.